

Foundling

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Summary:

A certain Pennywise discovers a power that transports him to another world, where he learns more about himself.

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

[A/N: An FYI that although I've seen both Skarsgard and Curry's IT, I've only recently begun reading the novel so a lot of this is based on a mix of fan-theory and personal species-headcanons for my own amusement. Self-insert and reader fics aren't my forte, but canonxcanon fics are, so this is my contribution to the fandom. Major props to all the amazing artists on Tumblr who are creating visuals for the "TwoCents" pairing. You inspire me. Also shout out to the clownf*cker fandom in general. Ya'll's good peoples.]

[**Update: A further FYI after seeing "IT part two" in the theater that I may be editing and re-writing this story a little in the future]

"My compliments to the chef, huh-hah..."

The remark is both a pat on the back and a form of self-deprecation, coming from a stout, balding version of Pennywise. The clown slurps down a batch of gelatinous orbs, each of them giving off a light that slowly dims once they reach the eldritch's belly. It's not the first time they've eaten their own eggs, but they had really been hoping that this time would be different.

Usually it was a depressing matter of having to fail continuously each time they tried to bring one of their own into this world. This time it's an act of desperation. The waking cycle started out promisingly enough, with plenty of prey and strangely few threats. Pennywise should have known the humans were up to one of their tricks.

One of the fuckers had remembered him. Him, the clown, not 'It' the monster or even 'She' the maker. 'She' was reserved for private moments anyway, which no human had ever been privy to. But they had remembered him, despite his best efforts to flood their minds with forgetfulness. A trigger was pulled that reminded them, one of

the fully-grown humans, of the dangers of Pennywise. He hadn't realized that one of his recent victims was the offspring of the one who remembered, this one who had escaped him in a hunt two cycles prior.

Time had passed, and adult humans like this one were not afraid of childhood horrors like It any longer. Each cycle the humans seem to get more and more deadly, armed with better weapons and more afraid of each other than of creatures in the dark. Pennywise has tried to keep up with them, sacrificing time out of each wake cycle to bring himself up to speed on all the little changes that can happen in humans over the course of 20-30 years. There are always so many changes, it's exhausting, and he doesn't understand how they can live so quickly. Perhaps that's why they die so quickly, too. They simply wear themselves out.

The one who remembered this time, he thinks their name was Tom or Sam or Josh...he's not sure. They like to recycle their names and spread them out to each other. So little individuality. That one brought an especially powerful weapon down into Pennywise's domain. Lethal and precise. That one tracked him down like the bastard had been training their whole life for the opportunity.

He had been forced to drain the life from all of his reserve caches, which were few as he had eaten more than usual, to create the eggs...and now he, she, they, IT was forced to eat those as well. There had been some promising souls in this batch too, clever and sensitive human children he had hunted, hoping to make them into eldritch children of his own. The kin he could have had. Such a terrible waste, like always.

Now he's huddled in the nest he'd built over the years, piled high with little keepsakes from the children that could have become his, hers, it's... Little things the children cherished for whatever reason. Just as he cherishes this particular form, this clown-suit persona, when he could take on any form he wished.

His clown-body is stained with black, ashy ichor from too many bullet wounds. There's no sense or energy left in trying to hide the injuries with glamour, and he can feel his flesh pulsing painfully under the cracks in his exoskeleton. He looks a bit like a ghoulish

fireplace, covered in soot and glowing from dying embers within. There is one egg left.

Pennywise considers the last of this clutch for a moment with a frown, gently resting claw-tipped hands on either side of the sphere. This thing had so much potential. Whatever he's feeling, looking down at the egg, he doesn't yet know how to identify it. He isn't given time to dwell on it, however.

Something thuds sharply into his shoulder and he's given a fresh coat of ichor to wear on his sleeve. Instinctively he takes hold of the egg and flees, leaving his nesting site in hopes of losing his enemy in the tunnels. He's painfully aware of how clumsy and noisy his body has become, as he tries to balance speed with stealth while sore and bleeding. He's so accustomed to using his abilities to blink himself to different locations instantaneously, that his pace now feels agonizingly slow.

He struggles his way up an old maintenance ladder after enough twists and turns, with only one arm free, and heaves himself inside an alcove, rolling and grunting with effort. The location is dangerously close to the surface, but being higher up gives him a strange sense of security. The egg lies nestled against his chest while he lays motionless on his side, breathing carefully to focus away from the pain he's in.

His tolerance for pain and injuries is remarkably high, years of scar tissue and uneven deposits from a repeatedly-healing exoskeleton dulling his sensitivity. There are some places where the damage has caused the nerves to die off, leaving him numb. Other places are particularly tender and shoot phantom pains in the middle of his hibernations. He knows his own limits. How much he can take.

This time, he's hovering on the edge of fear. Not simple wariness or caution, or even anxiousness, but genuine uncontrolled panic. That feeling doesn't hit him until a bit of time passes quietly, with only the sound of running water and the occasional rat, and he tries to move and discovers he can't. He took too long resting, used up too much energy escaping, and now his damn body won't move.

He breathes carefully. More time passes. He feels the gentle hum of

his un-hatched offspring, warm and oblivious. He wonders whose soul is inside the orb. Which child he hunted. He hopes it's one of the smaller ones. They're less likely to remember the pain of the life before.

Footsteps sound wetly in a tunnel below, then pause. A gun is reloaded. Pennywise tries to move again, claws flexing. His limbs will obey with some effort, but the rest of him is too heavy. He breathes less carefully than before, curls into a ball around the egg. They'll both die here now. He laments the thought of vanishing from memory completely, but supposes it's better than the new eldritch hatching alone.

Alone. Like IT did. Alone amongst all this violent wilderness, floundering in the dark...what was all of this for? What was he here in this world for, anyway?

Then he hears it, the metallic sound of his enemy climbing the ladder, slowly and softly. He curls tighter, wills his body to take him someplace else, wills there to be some energy left in him. He clasps the egg to him, whispers something like a mantra in an otherworldly tongue. Too many feelings wash over him for him to pick them out individually. He's never felt this desperate before, somehow. Even at death's door, never has he felt so desperate, and he can't fathom why.

somewhere safe...not alone...somewhere safe...not alone...

The sounds of the human who would make Pennywise their prey draw closer.

Somewhere safe. Not alone. Somewhere safe. Not alone.

He feels the impact of the human's free hand reaching the top of the ladder, the clack of them positioning their weapon, their hot angry breath. He hears them utter a curse, then a breathy laugh. Victorious.

****SOMEWHERE SAFE! NOT ALONE!****

For a brief moment Pennywise's innards feel like they're disintegrating, he's burning alive, there's a brightness that blooms painfully out of his form. Crackles of energy spiderweb along the

damp walls of the alcove. He hears the human shout in alarm, then the satisfying crunch of bones breaking when dropped from a great height, and a scream.

After that he is somewhere else, dark and quiet. He feels a current pulling him, like dark water, but somehow he knows that is not what this is. He's suspended, and the egg too, glowing faintly in front of him, in a place completely devoid of light. Gradually the glow of the orb gets even softer. At first he thinks the egg is perishing, but curiously he watches it cocoon itself in a hard outer shell, like stone.

He feels a shockwave of some sort, reaches out blindly in the blackness, but it's gone. His offspring has vanished. He floats there in this dead space awhile, this void, before tentatively trying his chant again. Almost as if trying to remind whatever power that had brought him here that there was unfinished business.

not...not alone? Not alone. Somewhere safe, not alone! Not alone not alone not--

Something yanks him harshly, and this time he feels the faintest pinprick of light, and real fluid trying to invade his lungs. He manages to claw his way to the surface where there is air, unable to shift his form quickly enough to adapt, and staggers around on something solid, senses dizzy, before blacking out completely.

2. Chapter 2

Notes for the Chapter:

[A/N: Sorry if this one seems a bit short, I've been busy with work this week and feeling a bit sick]

Something drips heavily onto the old clown's forehead, and it doesn't run down ticklishly like water should. He hisses softly in half-hearted annoyance, moves a hand up to wipe it away, not fully aware. The air pressure near him shifts, he feels vibrations from something large skittering away. His eyes snap open then, fiery and slitted as he growls warningly.

There's a snuffling noise, like some animal sniffing him out, and the sound of claws scrabbling nervously as whatever it is continues moving around. The smell of sewer water orients Pennywise to his environment, but it seems out of place somehow. It's familiar and yet...off. Certainly it's no place for a creature larger than a rodent or insect, other than himself.

He sits up gingerly, body stiff from swollen joints and dried ichor, and tries to take a look around. Something flits out of the corner of his vision, barking out a kind of alarmed laugh that echoes through the tunnels, like a hyena. He tastes anxiety in the air, confusion, excitement.

With a resigned grumble, the clown finds a wall and crawls over so he can sit against it. No sense in wasting energy right now, so he waits instead, eyes and ears peeled. He's used to using patience as a key hunting tactic, wearing the prey down until it's exposed by its own fear. It's one of the few things he can admit he admires about humans, their dogged persistence, tracking down creatures much swifter and stronger than they are to the bloody end.

The source of the noises explodes in front of him suddenly, with the faintest wisps of traveling-vapor clinging around its form. It's all aggression and blazing eyes and teeth, snarling in his face, and he feels himself jolt backwards against the wall against his will. It's not necessarily that he's frightened by the apparition. He could almost

count the seconds of silence before it appeared with perfect accuracy. It's a familiar game to him. A tactic he used often when he was a younger being, imitating the hunting patterns of carnivorous animals. Pounce and strike.

No. He jerks backwards because he can't believe what he's seeing, and he has the inkling that the feeling is mutual. It's like looking at himself through some sort of warped funhouse mirror. The other eldrritch stops in their assault for a moment, considering him with a pouty glare, refusing to break eye contact. The more wizened of the two is unconcerned with imitative posturing at the moment and studies the being in front of them, looking them up and down in a kind of awe.

Tall and spindly. This one's had a fairly consistent diet. No famine stunting It's growth at an early age. He would have to guess by it's behavior that it's a less picky eater, too. This one would feast on any living thing whose heart rate would quicken for It. The stouter of the two is a little bit envious.

The taller one's clown-suit is not quite convincing enough, though. It's mannerisms not quite human enough. It has not been paying attention to the changes humans go through each cycle, as evidenced by the aged style of clothing on It's form. These realizations make the shorter one feel a bit better. This other one has a lovely form, which would almost be graceful if it were not so erratic...but it is clearly an inferior hunter. It can't *afford* to be picky. Yes, that must be it.

He bears his fangs in a feral grin, oozing positive confidence, and watches the other grow sullen and skittish again. Eye contact is broken, as It looks away from him and shakes itself in displeasure, backing up a few feet. This other one reminds him of a nervous dog. He runs his tongue over his teeth in delight, brings himself up to a standing position, takes a step forward. He's the master of illusions and he laughs at the irony that he suddenly wants to touch something to make sure that's it's real.

The other being's eyes roll up into it's head and it growls low, trying to psych him out. It's clothes and hair seem to puff a little in warning. The smaller eldrritch maintains his grin, approaches slowly, feeling the tiniest bit worried. This thing might run away and leave him

alone, or it might try to maul him.

"Oh come on old boy, don't be like that. Wouldn't you rather have some company?"

" **NO.** "

There's a brief silence between them where he considers his mistake. Speaking to this other one like he might a human. No wonder it's got its hackles raised. It occurs to him that the other one might be confused, trying to figure out exactly what he is. He always tries so hard to blend in with humans for survival, behaving like one is second nature. He bears his fangs a bit more, lets his claws come out, tilts his head and tries a different tone.

" ***I HAVE TRAVELED TO THIS PLACE BY ACCIDENT. I AM PLEASED TO ENCOUNTER YOU.*** "

The taller being's eyes roll back into a normal position with a wet, sucking sound and It glares at him again. It looks like someone about to have a tantrum, eyes tinting orange and red.

" ****TRESPASSING! OUT! OUT!**** "

" ***FaIr EnOuGh...*** "

His voice wavers in disappointment, but now is not the time to argue or fight. He is still so tired. With a sigh he retracts his fangs and claws, shakes himself to re-establish his glamour. He may encounter more humans sooner than later, and though he'd rather not spend the energy on camouflaging himself, he has even less energy to spend combating one of his own kind.

He plods through the tunnels in the direction that smells most like fresh air, while the other being watches him go, wrinkling their nose and bobbing their head.

The daylight outside the tunnels has him squinting uncomfortably, as he takes a look around. It's similar to his old home, with perhaps a

slightly different placement of trees. How fascinatingly strange this is. He glances back at the dark entrance he's just emerged from, pondering. A low growl filters toward him from it, faintly, and he chuckles. He can take a hint.

He keeps walking, thinking perhaps he'll camp out somewhere in a secluded patch of woodland when night falls. Though he's concerned about being so exposed, his curiosity gets the better of him and propels him to the outskirts of civilization. A town.

It's a little different than he remembers, but it is without a doubt, Derry. Or some version of Derry at least. He watches humans go about their business, taking note of their clothes. There are hints of styles from many different cycles he's seen, all blended up and merged together here. He wonders what year it is in this world. That other clown seems younger than he, but these humans seem...more modern. Did the other one hatch later than he?

Then he smells it. Fear. He gravitates toward it, hears the sounds of intimidation. A circle of humans bullying a singled out one. This is a familiar scene he's witnessed many times. He creeps closer, tries to place himself out of sight, but within range of the fear that's being emitted.

The ringleader of the circle does his work for him, heckling and tormenting the prey. He thinks he'll hide and feed on the residual feelings this time. One person covers the victim's mouth, while the ringleader inflicts pain. He hears muffled screams, then a quiet kind of chirp, and he tenses. It's the sound that the weapon that nearly killed him makes when used. A gun with a silencer. The prey is dead.

Well, that was a briefer meal than he'd hoped for. He begins to consider moving on to find a place to rest, when the group of voices gets closer. They've spotted him, and as far as they're concerned, he's a human witness to their murder.

“Bozo! Hey, Bozo! Where'd'ya think you're going?!”

There's too many of them to hunt at once, and he can't risk drawing even more attention to himself from the townsfolk. He runs. That slow kind of running again. He'll have to become more familiar with

this place before he can hope to teleport around it. This place that's his and yet not his.

3. Chapter 3

Notes for the Chapter:

[A/N: Got over being sick and finally found the time/energy to finish this chapter; enjoy!]

Pennywise grits his teeth as he flees, while they shift into something more serrated. Humans are so ungainly in how they run. Energy-efficient, but ungainly. He has to use his arms for balance, going at this speed. If he was less concerned about drawing more attention to himself, he would be moving in more of a quadrupedal fashion.

As it is, his plan is to lure the group into the trees and separate them, away from the main hub of the town. Given that they just killed one of their own, there's little chance that they'll want to get authorities involved, too. Lest they be punished.

This might actually turn out well for him, if he can make it to his destination without getting shot. He and the group of humans have the same basic goal, to isolate and kill with stealth. It's just a matter of who strikes first.

Take out the one holding the weapon first...

It's his first solid thought, as he tries to catch his breath and look for a good vantage spot to launch an attack from. He slips behind an old tree and waits, camouflaging himself as a ladder of fungi trailing down its trunk. The group runs past him, then, predictably, ends up splitting up to look for him.

He moves carefully from tree trunk to tree trunk, watching for their reactions and camouflaging when needed, until he locates his main target. The man has the gun cocked and ready, looking and listening, while side-stepping through the leaves. The ringleader's companions are less meticulous, noisy, calling out threats. Good. Pennywise can work with that.

He gets close enough that he can probe the ringleader's mind a bit, looking for something to use against them. Normally he would slip away safely to his lair at this point, but he has no lair, his own fear has bled away from him, and he's *angry* now. He did not narrowly escape death to be shot down like a deer just after arriving in this place.

The ringleader seems to fear no man or beast, but the supernatural...that is another matter entirely to them. Pennywise grins fiendishly and lets a dark chuckle roll out of him, makes it echo around the woods near his target, where only they can hear. The sound seems to them to come from many different directions, leading to them nervously pointing the gun this way and that.

Pennywise can hear his prey's breathing change, smell the light dusting of perspiration, see the suddenly jerky body language and widened eyes. It's quite satisfying, and he moves even closer, using phantom sounds to lure his target further away from the others. The music of an ancient organ-grinder plays in the human's mind, getting louder as they move farther away from the group.

When they are sufficiently far enough away, a red balloon floats near the man's face, brushes their temple gently and then pops. The ringleader empties their bullets into the air in a panic, but the silencer prevents their companions from hearing it. A stray bullet strikes the tree the clown has hidden behind, but does not pierce through to hurt him. No more hiding.

The fear he tastes in the air brings out his baser instincts, and he strolls out languidly from behind the tree, licking his fangs and walking jovially over towards the target. There is a certain amount of excitement he gets from any good hunt, but something about turning the tables like this, coming out on top over something that made him feel threatened, makes it downright intoxicating. Perhaps he should flirt with danger more often.

He searches for their name, pulls it from their head, even as the man curses him and fumbles to reload their weapon. The clown bears his teeth in a kind of rictus grin and moves within striking distance. The name comes. Then deeper, a nickname, from the prey's childhood, unused for a long time. Even better.

“Hiya, Danny. Out for a walk in the park, are we?”

It has the desired affect of throwing the prey off-guard, increasing their sense of unease. Still, Pennywise keeps his body language relaxed and nonchalant, non-threatening. It gives him an air of confidence and prevents the prey from running away in blind panic. No, he needs to be close enough to take this one down, and quickly. Patience.

“Fuck you! My name is Dan!”

The man’s hands are shaking as they try to insert more bullets into their gun. They’re distracted and making a bit too much noise for the clown’s taste. Now is the perfect time.

Pennywise bears his teeth fully and lunges with a growl, sinking them into the man’s throat. It’s not enough time for his prey to react in defense, but just enough time to send a jolt of terror through them. He lets out a little satisfied purr and wraps his arms around the body that claws feebly at him as the human bleeds out, giving them a strangely tender embrace. When the man stops moving he stands up and pulls the corpse up with him, spins a bit with it in a sort of playful waltz, licks his teeth and then drops it to the ground before stalking off after the others.

He’s feeling a strange bit of hysteria now, almost giddy. He would usually be much more careful than this, proud of it even. There’s a small voice in the back of his mind telling him that his time is up, and that he is just prolonging the inevitable now. No home, no safe place, surrounded and vulnerable by his enemies. May as well have some fun first before the end, right?

A bit further away, watching from the branches of a tree with eyes off-kilter, is another hunter, watching in fascination. They slip down to the discarded body, taste the air around it, uncertain. This is fear, but it is not **their** fear, and the thought of feeding on prey not hunted by they themselves feels wrong, somehow. Like some kind of cowardly scavenger.

The taller entity shakes themselves in disgust, as a matter of pride, and circles the body again. It tastes the air again, not certain. They examine the weapon, picking it up and turning it over in their hands, memorizing the design and textures. They press the item through the glamour of fabric and flesh, deep inside their bony rib-structure, for safekeeping.

A trophy. They have taken a trophy from the kill and in doing so have laid claim to it. The corpse is theirs. It can be eaten now. Satisfied by this logic, they make a tentative lick over the gaping neck wound left by the intruder, admiring just how much blood has been spilled by one injury. The salting of the prey's flesh is mild, hasty, not strong enough for this one's liking. But there is another flavor beneath it, which intrigues them. Something sweet and lingering, some residue left from the other hunter's saliva, from whatever it was feeling when it struck the final blow.

The tall one laps curiously at the human's throat for a bit longer, then moves down and opens it's maw of jagged teeth, and severs the human's head from the body with a well-placed crunch. Another trophy, and a special flavor saved for later. Gripping the head by the hair atop it, Pennywise tastes the air again and follows the trail of terror and blood left by this stranger that is like them and yet not like them.
